

Dexca Farm - Dexca Tribe Indians Bath Co.

Settled - Recorded 17th 1784 - from
Thomas McNeill - 1768 - 1989 = 221 yrs.
Original 300 A. Served Am. Rev. - 2 exultants
Robert Brooke
Under shelter

Jonathan -

Wm. The Teacher -

Capt. Jim - 1823 - 1911 - Captured Civil War - Droop Mt.
18 mo. H. Delaware (Union - Yankee)

H. D. - 1877 - 1964 = Prof., Lawyer, Teacher, Traveler,
Writer -

> House - State Post Laureate -

Jim - Blue - Jamie

8 generations -

Ocat Clan - Isle of Barra - Scotland - Phil - by
Frederick Co. - Va. Snago - Castle still exists
& in good condition.

Indian Graves -

Dea Chest - Four box - Walnut marked & facing
Cabinet - beds - tables. (Cherry Drop leaf)

24th Day Dec. 1774 -

Robert Brooke, Esquire Gov. Va. = 215 yrs.
1774 -

THOMAS McNEILL
MONUMENT DEDICATION
SERVICE



October 24, 1981

1:30 P.M.

Buckeye, West Virginia

1776



1976

THOMAS McNEILL

ca 1747 - ca 1800

HE BUILT HIS CABIN ON THIS SITE IN 1769 THE PIONEER
SETTLED BY SWAGG

HE FOUGHT IN THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION AND SERVED TWO
ENLISTMENTS UNDER GEORGE ROGERS CLAY

Let us now praise famous men,
 and our fathers in their generations.
 The Lord apportioned to them great glory,
 his majesty from the beginning.
 There were those who ruled in their kingdoms,
 and were men renowned for their power,
 giving counsel by their understanding,
 and proclaiming prophecies;
 leaders of the people in their deliberations,
 wise in their words of instruction;
 those who composed musical tunes,
 and set forth verses in writing;
 rich men furnished with resources,
 living peaceably in their habitations--
 all these were honored in their generations,
 and were the glory of their times.
 There are some of them who have left a name,
 so that men declare their praise.
 And there are some who have no memorial,
 who have perished as though they had not lived.
 But these were men of mercy,
 whose righteous deeds have not been forgotten;
 their prosperity will remain with their descendants,
 and their inheritance to their children's children.
 Their posterity will continue for ever.
 And their glory will not be blotted out.
 Their bodies were buried in peace.
 And their name lives to all generations.
 Peoples will declare their wisdom,
 And the congregation proclaims their praise.

--Ecclesiasticus 44:1-4ac,5-9ab,
 10-11, 13-15

Opening Remarks B11
 6th gen

Scripture Stacy McC
 7th ge
 (Ecclesiasticus 44: 1-4 ac,
 5-9 ab, 10-11, 13-15)

Prayer Gra
 Ancestral

Poem - "The Flame" written by Louis
 read by Annabell

Reception to be held immediately followi
 Dedication Service at the White House, w
 stands on the original Thomas McNeill la

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bridge on Buckleys - Still there
About $1\frac{1}{2}$ ft. over ground - well
Used for Comm. that was there then.

Susie or Glenna Can add to or
Contradict my version, Since they
Are older than I am.

School House on Dry Creek - ^{Lower end} Aunt ^{to Daisy}
Edna taught there some - Bill
McNeill possessed game land.

Electricity Came to Buckleys in '39 ^{June}
Capt. Killingsworth - P.D. & W.W. Graham
Bill Rogers ^{Bill Rogers}
Big Salesmen - 3.00 per mo. per mile
as far as Bill Rogers - Joe took it
to Paul's Demean present home at our
Expense.

1916-17-18 ^{+ model} ~~model~~ Cars in this part
of Country - Indian trails used as roads
2 in our place.

Norman Rose - 14 yrs - 1st Airplane
He saw come over - field over towards
old house, this day

Well Casing - in field below
bridge on Buckleys - Still to
About $1\frac{1}{2}$ ft. over of ground - W
Used for Comm. that was there

Susie or Glenna Can add to or
Contradict my recollections, Since
Are older than I am.

School House on Dry Creek - ^{Lower 2} ^{to 300} Acres
Edna taught there some - Belle
McNeill possessed game land.

M. Hill possess game land.

Electricity came to Buckeye in
apt. Killingsworth - P.D. & W.W. H.
Bill Rogers
is Sales engineer - 3⁰⁰ per mo. per
as far as Bill Rogers - Joe too
Paul is Denean present home a
expense).

+ model
15⁺ ~~month~~ Can with

of Country - Indian trails used as
✓ 2 in our place.

Norman Rose - 14 yrs - 1st Air pl
He saw come over - field over
old house,

Monument being erected - 176⁸
Pioneer Settler of Swago - wa
Thomas McNeill - Price's H

Spring Cleaning

By Louise McNeill

lost one of the great West Virginians when Laureate Louise McNeill was buried on June 9, 1993 — West Virginia Day, naturally enough. Her long life overlapped the entire history of GOLDENSEAL, and we were proud to have had the opportunity to bring some of her prose into

our favorite was "Spring Cleaning," a previously unpublished manuscript she drew from her files in life. Like most of her prose this story deals with the Pocahontas County homeplace which the McNeills have treasured since Revolutionary War

in those gentle years, 1865-1920, our Pocahontas County household was relatively serene. For despite the Great White Granny's temper fits, Mama's annual bouts of housecleaning, our life still moved to the slow, rhythmic of the seasons, and the sky roof of our cottage in the meadow the sun fell and the snow gently, and the summer rain.

There was a country school-teacher later a principal and a good, even great, at that. He was also a part-time farmer with a pocket and a dream in his name was George McNeill. Nearly everyone in the neighborhood called him "Uncle George," but not to his face. He had once been a school-teacher, but now she was a mother, cook, gardener, seamstress, maid, pig woman, raiser, blackberry pie maker, moreover, my mother. She hated it every day

and every season, but particularly when the spring sunshine came in to show it up. So every May or early June she must hold her great spring housecleaning, a rigorous and ancient ritual which we must celebrate from before daybreak until after dead dark.

Not like later when someone would come in to wash the woodwork in my house, Windex my windows, and I'd lug the box of dusty Christmas decorations upstairs. No, my mother, when she spring housecleaned, spring housecleaned; and there was nothing casual in her touch.

On that morning, chosen by moon signs for its promise of "warm and sunny," Mama would be up long before daylight, shaking the kitchen range down, grinding her coffee, putting on the bacon and eggs. Then, breakfast over, we would hurry out to do the milking, strain the milk, slop the hogs, feed the chickens, and start carrying in, by way of three-gallon buckets, a barrel of water from the spring. Then a fire would be built at the wash place

and two 20-gallon kettles of water put on to boil.

By then the sun would be up, the yard grass drying, and the fire gone out in the kitchen range. When the stove cooled sufficiently, with G. D. helping we would pick it up and, with great labor and puffing, carry it out into the yard. This done, it was time for G. D. to go off to his manwork, though sometimes, as a boon to Mama's intentions, he would hire a sturdy neighbor woman who would come across the field at sun-up, happy to work for 35 cents a day.

Thus supported and often with brother Ward, too, staying around to add his carrying power to the festivities, Mama would begin to transfer all our goods and chattels from house to yard. For this was the old custom, to carry every lock, stock, and bobble out of the house, set the wild collection down on the yard grass, scrub it or dust it and sun it; and then, in the late evening, the inside of the house by then scrubbed and squeaky clean, to carry everything back in.



Mother Grace McNeill, shown here (right) with sister Neva, never dressed this way for the annual housecleaning.



r Grace McNeill, shown here (right) with sister Neva,
dressed this way in 1880.



Perhaps the labor was not actually as heavy as it now seems to me, for we had only wooden furniture; and Grandpa's black walnut dining table was only eight feet long; the isinglass parlor stove easy enough for four people to carry; and, besides, the day itself gave forth its air of singular flurry and excitement, of new beginnings and hot soapsuds and cleansing sun.

The first thing Mama would do was to get the parlor stove out and stored for the summer in the smokehouse. Then she would take a hammer and screwdriver and start her attack on the windows — the small-paned, cordless variety — for they must be removed, their casing strips coming down with them; then all the windows lugged out carefully into the dooryard and leaned up against the plank fence to receive their ablutions of warm water and homemade soap.

Then all the furniture, odds and ends, rugs, books, and dishes must be carried or dragged out onto the yard grass and the clothes hung on the clothesline to sun. This great out-going would include, of course, all the old-fashioned beds, with their slats, springs, feather ticks and straw ticks — a mass of wood, metal and striped ticking that would be scattered in a confused tangle all across the front yard.

Then the cleaning would begin with buckets of hot water from the boiling kettle and buckets of clean cold water for the rinse. And, of course, into the hot water Mama

would put handfuls of her soft homemade soap, that brown ropy substance that she and Granny — in its own season — had made from hog grease and ash lye. This soft soap, along with its peculiar clean stink, was the very center of cleaning day and the very cleaning process itself — the bedsteads to be washed with it and the windows and even the inside of the dresser drawers — so that now its strange brown smell comes back to me, but it is *not* the scent of cinnamon rose. Instead, it is a wild, brown, acid, slightly chemical smell, with a taint of rancid hog grease in it and with that sweet fragrance of childhood memory, soapsuds and joy and springtime sun. And a world away from "ring around the collar," Downy, Tide, and Cheer.

Mama would be pouring soapsuds on the glass of the windows and washing them off with an old rag. Then she would turn the windows over, wash the other side, slosh buckets of cold rinse water on them, and leave them drying in the sun.

Usually during this initial stage of the festivities, Ward would be patiently cleaning out the kitchen stove and stovepipe with a wire and sticks and an old feather duster, the winter's collection of soot floating dangerously close to the clothesline; and the old dog barking his excitement; the clothes flapping merrily on the line.

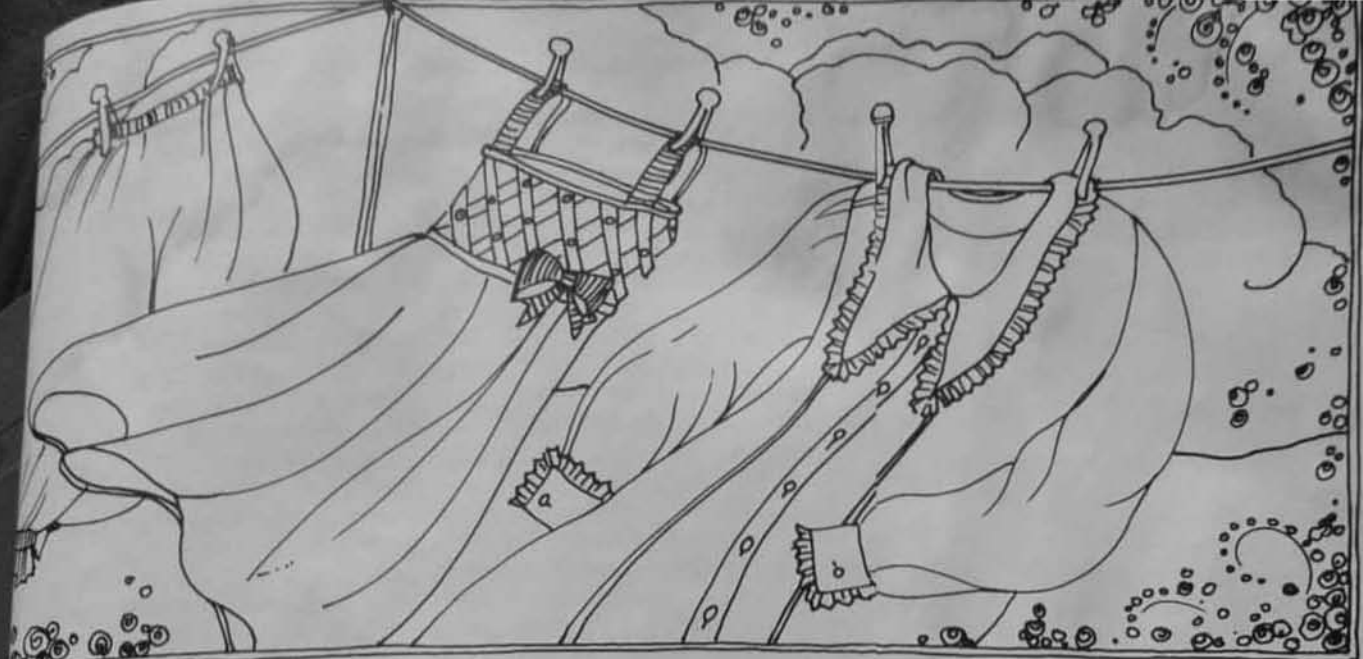
The hired woman, left inside the house, would be scrubbing the wide-board floors, dusting the

walls and ceilings with a rag-covered broom, and washing the painted woodwork with slathers of brown soap.

Elizabeth and I might be assigned to "red up" the dresser drawers, wash the reams of kitchen utensils, and wipe off G. D.'s multiplying tribe of books. As we cleaned the drawers, there was one drawer we must never open. It was the right-hand upper drawer of Grandpa's black walnut highboy — the drawer that was never opened except by the Head of the House. That was G. D., and G. D. was to town or far off in the field someplace.

We knew Grandpa as the Captain, from his Civil War service, so the drawer was never opened because it was "the Captain's drawer," though by 1920 — say 1920 was the year of this specific cleaning — the old Captain had been dead for many years. But his drawer was never opened; and not opened now, either, except by the oldest male member — because it is the Captain's drawer. So, back then, Elizabeth and I would neaten and refold the sheets and pillowcases in the lower part of the highboy and then start washing the endless dishes and endless pots and pans.

By now — getting on toward noon — Ward would be filling the straw ticks with the new straw from the straw rick, and Mama would sew them up with a darning needle and twine thread. Then the old straw was thrown into the hog pen and the washing and scrubbing would go on.



Granny, meanwhile, for she was always on her own individual edge of the activity, would be going over the bedsprings and all the bed cracks and crannies, going over them in that ancient routine of the mountains, with a turkey feather dipped in turpentine. For turpentine is death on bedbugs, and Granny was always certain that our beds had been colonized by the little, red, bloodsucking bugs. The bedbug argument was one of the many sources of friction between Granny and Mama, for Mama insisted that there were no bedbugs, while Granny insisted that there were whole settlements of them and would spend half a day with her oily feather, going in and out of all the cracks and crannies in her old pioneer routine. Next she would slosh the bedsteads with buckets of soapy water; and then get her a big stick and start beating and flailing at the rugs.

The rugs, with one exception, Mama's 9-by-12 from the floor of the parlor, were not rugs, actually, but home-woven cotton carpets, the ones that Lydie Allen, up on Dry Crick, wove on her great clacking loom. None of the women of our house could weave carpets now — the old skills passing slowly and silently — but Lydie Allen could still weave, and also Grandma Susan and Cousin Mahalie, though Lydie did most of the neighborhood carpets now.

So Mama, when new carpet was needed, would cut carpet rags in

the winter, cutting their long strips from pieces of worn-out clothing, then sewing the strips together, and winding them into great basketball-sized balls. Then she would carry the great soft multicolored balls up the crick to Lydie, and, when the carpet was woven, would nail it down on the floor with carpet tacks, the old square-topped kind.

These carpet tacks, though only around the carpet edges, could wreak havoc on a child's bare feet, and turpentine would have to be poured down into the little puncture holes. Then, too, this carpet would become, during a long year's season, a great catch-all for dust and dirt. And though Mama all year, on her day of Saturday cleaning, would sprinkle salt and water on the carpet and sweep up the yellow, dirty salt, still the carpet was a dusty catch-all, and on spring cleaning day must be taken up from the floor, drug out into the yard, then beaten and turned over, and beaten again with all of Granny's fury; while the dust rose from it in yellow fogs; and the dog barked; and the chickens ran and cackled; and the wham-wham of Granny's beating stick echoed against the smokehouse wall.

At noontime we would hurriedly eat the cold lunch Mama had prepared for the occasion and then hurry back to the conflict. The window curtains must be washed and stretched, the wearing clothes carried back into the house to their pegs and to our one closet, so that

the scatter rugs could be put on the clothesline and beaten with paddles and sticks.

By now the hired woman would have the inside of the house all clean and soap-smelling, and we could begin to carry in our gear. The heavy old carpet came first, and we would drag it heavily and pull it into place. Then Mama and Ward, crawling on their knees, would attempt to stretch it and tack it down, thus to cover up, for another dusty season, the old Captain's wide-board cherry floor.

It would be almost dusk when we sat down to supper, and the cows still to be milked, the eggs still to be gathered, but Mama would glance around the dining room with a look of weary satisfaction. For though the ceiling still leaked, and the old wallpaper still hung in bubbles, the room was full of soap and sweetness. Then one time, I remember Mama going into the Captain's room in the twilight and setting up in the very middle of the table a bunch of pink flowers in her pretty glass dish. And all the room smelled of sweet flowers and brown soap and sunlight; and I can smell it now, and the harsh old brown soap smell makes the tears sting in my eyes.

The empty scrubbed rooms of the house would seem, at this juncture, very big and silent, with all their people gone. I would walk through the echoing rooms, smelling the sun and soap, and then, staring into the corners, would sense the presence of the old Captain as he had worked,

pounding and sawing here in the old summers — just back from Yankee prison, so many years ago.

But Mama would call me from my wanderings. It was time to carry in the furniture, to reinstall the windows, and hang the clean curtains on their wooden rods. So our dragging and puffing would begin all over. Then Mama would take — as all women must take — a spell of rearranging the furniture, a fit which would double the burden and require the transfer of dressers, tables, and what-nots of various kind. But the Captain's black walnut highboy would always be put back into its exact old place against the wall; and the carved handle of its upper right-hand drawer would stare out at me, saying, "Do Not Touch. I am the Captain's Drawer."

After Mama's shifting and staring were over, we would carry the gear back into the kitchen — the stove still absent — and rearrange the cupboard shelves. Then the beds must be put together; their side pieces knocked into their places with a hammer; and the slats laid on, the springs, the straw tick, then the feather tick — in that order; and then the beds made up for the night. And the shining windows reinstalled with nails and hammer, and the sweet-smelling curtains hung.

Then, by late supper time, G. D. would come to help carry the range

back into the kitchen and — after an immortal struggle — manage to get the stovepipe into its hole.

But all of Mama's housecleanings did not go as smooth and sunny as this one typical day. One time a sudden rainstorm swooped down on us from Bridger's Mountain, with Mama running to gather up G. D.'s books, yelling at us to "get in the feather ticks" and the rain inundating a great scattering of our household effects.

Then that other and historic day when G. D. arrived at late noon hour to announce calmly that State School Superintendent Maurice P. Shawkey was arriving for a fried chicken supper at half-past six. It was this day that G. D. helped us carry in the furniture, helped nail down the carpet, labored manfully to get the window strips back in place. And all of us kids running back and forth for loads of old coats, kitchen equipment, shirts and neckties, leather volumes of Charles Dickens, chamber pots, bed ticks, spice boxes — and G. D. pounding the kitchen stovepipe into its black, ill-fitting hole.

By four o'clock the house was furnished, though the spice boxes were under the bed and the empty straw ticks stuffed into the closet. The beds looked a little low, of course, and the curtains wrinkled; but the fire was flickering in the kitchen stove, and Mama was out in the big

yard, ready to direct us as we ran the doomed chickens down. She selected three fairly young red roosters and set us on the trail. Around and around the big yard we pursued the first one, the rooster, his head up like a plumed Indian, running with his legs high and squawking wildly and doubling out and in. Round and round the yard and then round and round the chicken house; and the dog with his death howl, and Mama flapping her apron on the turns.

But finally he was cornered, then his two wild brothers with him; and all three carried, squawking and flailing, to the chopping block, where Mama dispatched them, in turn, with one practiced flash of the ax; then popped them into a scalding kettle; jerked their feathers off in big handfuls; and — lighting a copy of the *Toledo Blade* — singed them with the flaming headlines; and then rushed, her eyes cold and her apron bloody, into the kitchen to gut them, cut them, and pop them into the pot.

At 6:30, while G. D. and State Superintendent Shawkey sat in the parlor talking, Mama was setting down in front of G. D.'s plate at the dining table a great platter of golden-brown fried chicken; then adding her dishes of creamy mashed potatoes, gravy, canned green beans, spiced peaches, pickles, and hot biscuits, and warm blackberry pie. As she moved around the table in her clean starched apron, she seemed — except for the strange gleam in her gentle blue eyes — as quiet as a rose.

Then she went in and invited the two men to supper, apologizing for her biscuits as they sat down. When we were all pulled up to the table, and our starched napkins unfolded, G. D. cleared his throat and asked Superintendent Shawkey to say the grace.

"Thank you for the blessings of this day; bless this food to our use..." And Mama sitting there with her hands folded and her head bent devoutly in prayer. For, as she used to say, "Cleanliness is next to Godliness," and "Many hands make light work." ❀

From Volume 19, number 1, Spring 1993

Louise McNeill's Last Book



In September 1994 the University of Pittsburgh Press published Louise McNeill's *Fermi Buffalo*, an extensive collection of the late poet laureate's favorite poems.

Fermi Buffalo was the project which provided excitement to McNeill's later years. The title reflects a fascination which McNeill — an historian whose son is a physicist — came to have with the contrast of the mythic past and the wonder of science, represented here by the buffalo roaming the grounds of the Fermi Nuclear Accelerator in Illinois.

As always, her poems range

from the profound to the playful, some as short as the three lines she called "Couple":

You have not changed —
for Time is kind;
Your face — to me —
is never lined;
As you grow wrinkled,
I grow blind.

McNeill collaborated with Charleston writer Topper Sherwood in preparing the manuscript for the book.

Fermi Buffalo, 91 pages, sells for \$29.95 in hardback and \$12.95 in paperback. The book may be purchased in bookstores or from the University of Pittsburgh Press, 127 North Bellefield Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15260.

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Dr. G. D. McNeill
 1877 - 1964
 Teacher at Buckeye
 1894 - 4 mo. School Term
 1895 -96; 1898 - 1900;
 1911 -



SENECA

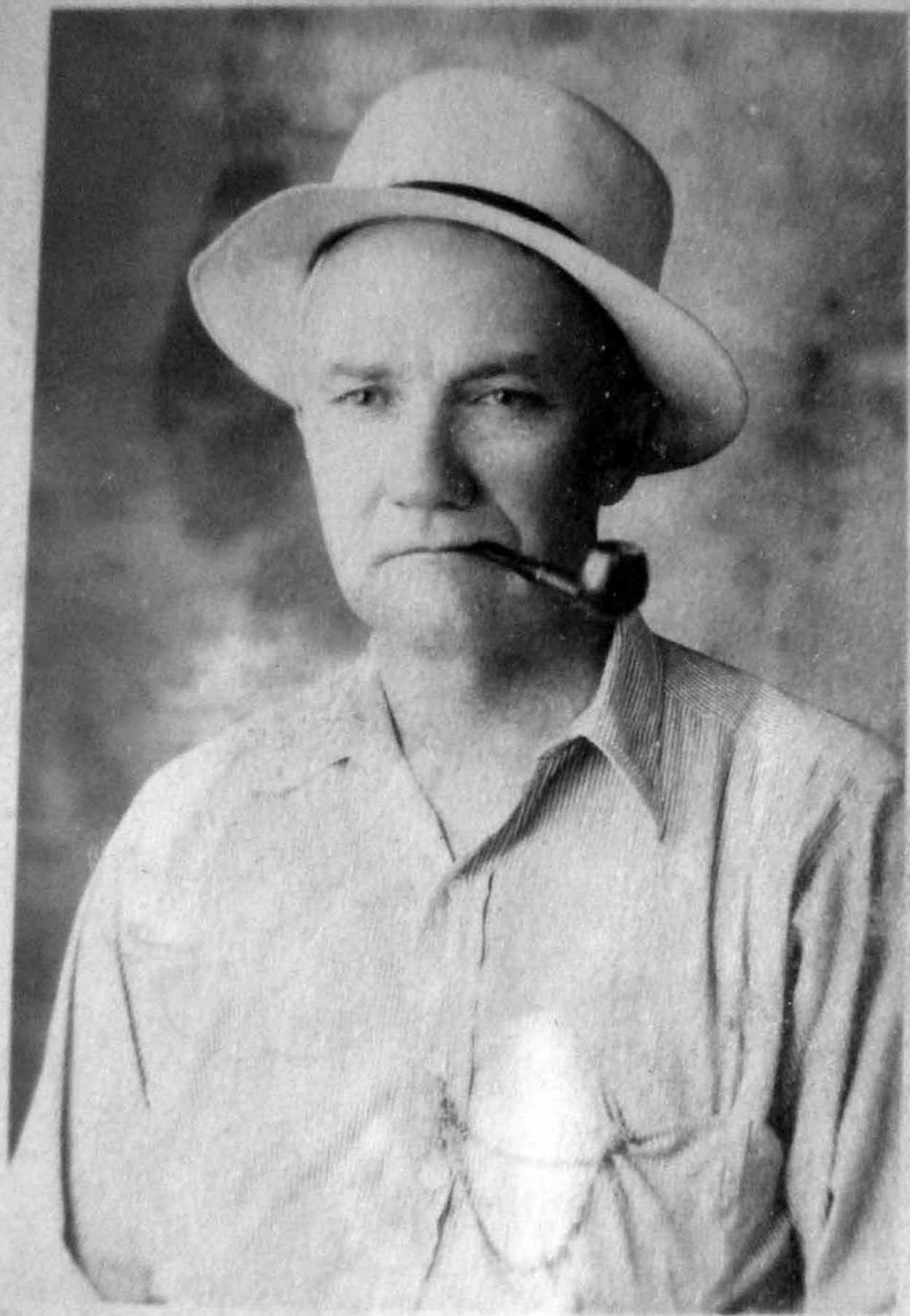


G. D. McNeill









SENECA



Edw. Weiss

1-16-23

1776



1976

THOMAS McNEILL

CA. 1747 - CA. 1800

HE BUILT HIS CABIN ON THIS SITE IN 1769, THE PIONEER
SETTLER OF SWAGO.

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